

THE THREE JAPANS.

There are three Japans. There is the idyllic Japan which Sir Edwin Arnold saw through poetical spectacles, there is the darkest Japan depicted in most sombre tones by Clement Scott, and there is the real Japan. Sir Edwin Arnold's views were expressed through the medium of the *London Daily Telegraph*, and Mr. Clement Scott's have also appeared in the same journal, but they are diametrically opposed to each other. Sir Edwin was infatuated, his colleague was disillusioned. Bringing to his aid the imagery of the poet, and availing himself of all, and more than all, the poet's license, Sir Edwin Arnold painted a glowing picture, as fanciful as it was highly colored. With the little almond-eyed woman for a subject he sketched an idyll, and the idyll was to reality what the bubble is to soap and water, vanishing at the first touch of the realistic. It may be that Sir Edwin Arnold wrote as he felt, without secret longings for the decoration of the Rising Sun. It may be that to him the submissive little maidens, gentle-voiced, ever ready to do an old man's bidding for the sake of his dollars, were to him of ethereal mould, too bright and too good for human nature's daily food. Perhaps he mistook their acquiescence for intelligence, their effusiveness for affection, their submission for self-denial. But whether deluded or not he gave to Japan an advertisement of a new kind. Many countries advertise their scenery, their industries, their facilities for travel, their excellent accommodation. Sir Edwin Arnold advertised Japan's women. The rake, the vigorous young man, the aged and hoary sinner were offered a new and delectable sensation, in the society of women, a little lower than the angels and far more acceptable to mortal man, while the higher class women were portrayed as the possessors of every virtue to charm. His rapturous eulogy fired the curiosity of many, among whom was his old colleague, Mr. Clement Scott. He read Sir Edwin's glowing phantasies, and being on a voyage around the world looked forward with much interest to visiting Japan. He has not missed matters. If a foreign journalist writing in one of the papers at the Treaty ports wrote anything half as truthful and as caustic, there would be raised in some quarters a perfect typhoon of pretended indignation, in which the phrase "brutal candour" would be unpleasantly prominent. Mr. Clement Scott's realistic analysis is the natural antithesis of Sir Edwin Arnold's adulation. Disappointed, disillusioned, Mr. Scott has gone to the opposite extreme and written only of the darkest side, but his Japan is not the real Japan any more than is Sir Edwin Arnold's. Pierre Loti's description is undoubtedly accurate, even to the hammering of the coin to test its genuineness, but what more could that somewhat blasé sensualist anticipate? He could scarcely expect to buy a wife who should expend on him a great deal of genuine affection for six months. The contract was one of sensuality on his part and mercenary on hers. But such women are no more to be considered as fair types of Japanese womanhood than the prostitutes who throng Regent street can be taken as specimens of the fidelity of the Englishwoman. Among the higher classes of Japanese women we believe chastity is as common a virtue as it is in the most virtuous woman of any country. Even with a lower class of women, among those who have married resident foreigners, there are numbers who have proved faithful, attentive and affectionate. Their intellectuality is doubtless on a lower plane than that of European or American women, but Japan is just emerging from a period of barbarism when women were mere playthings, and often mere chattels. The mental development of Japanese women will follow the intellectual progress of the men, and when the latter have attained a high grade the women will fit themselves to be helpmeets. As to Mr. Clement Scott's denunciation of tea-houses, he is placing the saddle on the wrong horse. The evils he mentions have in most cases arisen to satisfy the needs of the foreigner. Off the beaten tracks, where foreigners rarely frequent, the tea-house is as decorously conducted as any hotel in England. Whisky is almost unknown, and courtesy has not yet been supplanted by rudeness, nor good manners by vice. The fact that the daughters of the lower middle classes are sold into the most abominable slavery of the Yoshiwaras, is one, however, for which there can be no excuse, and the Government, in legalizing it, are bringing disgrace upon the country. The placing of the girls in cages may be reprehensible, but it is an improvement upon that which prevails in countries where abandoned women flaunt their painted attractions in the streets, but the hideousness of a sale of a child to a life of such utter degradation is revolting to all who possess an atom of humanity. Now that the subject of the smuggling of women abroad for immoral purposes is occupying so much attention, and eliciting so much indignation, it is opportune that this shocking custom should be held up to contempt. Some may say that it concerns Japan alone, but a touch of nature makes the whole world kin, and the common kinship of mankind is sufficient excuse for any one seeking to remove so foul a blot on Japan's fair name.—*Hongo News*.

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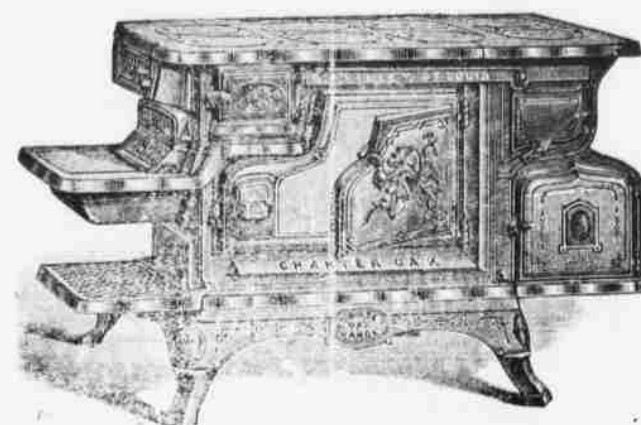
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